



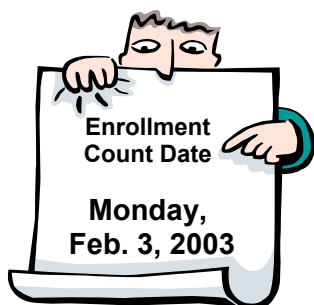
January 2003

# SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE

*A Monthly Newsletter Published by the School Budgeting and Accounting Division*

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## Spring Enrollment Count

1) Non-MAEFAIRS (Paper) Filers – OPI will mail paper forms and instructions to paper-filing districts. [NOTE: If

someone else does your MAEFAIRS entry, you are not a paper filer—your Registered MAEFAIRS User will send your forms to you.]

2) MAEFAIRS Users – On or about January 27, OPI will email all users a message that MAEFAIRS is open for enrollment data and instructions for downloading. After downloading, please print paper forms and distribute, **along with instructions from the MAEFAIRS system**, to whoever will take the counts. If your enrollment is submitted on MAEFAIRS, OPI does not need paper copies.

Please submit enrollment reports ASAP after February 3. OPI must have reports from ALL districts before calculating special education block grant rates and posting budget data sheets, which are due to districts by March 1.

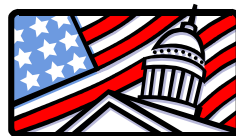
**Enrollment is due by February 12, but earlier is even better!!** OPI Contact: Tal Redpath (406) 444-3024 or [fredpath@state.mt.us](mailto:fredpath@state.mt.us).

### ***Questions or comments about this newsletter?***

Contact Joan Anderson at (406) 444-1960 or [janderson@state.mt.us](mailto:janderson@state.mt.us).

## Legislative News

Major bills impacting school finance are moving through the Legislature. Rep. Holly Raser (Missoula) is carrying HB 73 on behalf of Superintendent Linda McCulloch which calls for a



3.7% increase in the basic entitlement and per-ANB entitlements in FY04 and a 3.2% increase in FY05. The

Governor's proposal increases the basic and per-ANB entitlements by 2% in FY04 and 1% in FY 2004-05 and includes a decrease in the direct state aid percentage from 44.7% to 42.6%. HB 193 by Rep. Gary Branae (Billings) would provide an annual payment of \$1,000 per FTE for each year of the next biennium. HB 332 by Rep. Dave Lewis (Helena) would establish a statewide school employee insurance pool to hold down health care costs. Superintendent Linda McCulloch issued a memo to schools concerning the fiscal impacts of the Governor's proposal (LC 1323) and the OPI proposal (HB 73): [View State Superintendent's Memo](#)

## EXCEL Spreadsheets for FY 2003-04 General Fund Budgeting

OPI spreadsheets for calculating general fund limitations for FY 2003-04 have been posted on the OPI web page under <School Finance><Excel Spreadsheets>.

OPI sent an email message containing the link. As with any other Legislative year, funding levels and budget limitations affecting FY 2003-04 will not be finalized until the session



ends in April. Consequently, the Excel spreadsheets will be issued as "Pre-Legislative" versions in January and will be updated after the Session ends. Contact Joan Anderson at (406) 444-1960 or [janderson@state.mt.us](mailto:janderson@state.mt.us).

### **Budget Data Sheets to be Issued March 1**

Preliminary Budget Data Sheets for FY 2003-04 containing ANB, Direct State Aid, Guaranteed Tax Base (GTB), and special education block grant rates will be posted on the OPI website March 1. OPI will notify you by email when the files are posted.

If funding levels change, Budget Data Sheets will likely be revised after the Legislative Session ends in April. OPI Contact: Nica Carte (406) 444-4401 or [ncarte@state.mt.us](mailto:ncarte@state.mt.us).

### **Close Out Grants....Whenever!**

Already spent the funds for your FY 2002-03 grant projects? The OPI Program Accountants encourage districts to submit all grant fiscal close-out reports as soon as funds have been spent. Contact OPI Program Accountants: Pat Dawes at (406) 444-3408, Madilon Beatty at (406) 444-4403, or Jurenne Fuchs at (406) 444-2560.

### **Flex Fund Payments This Month!**



OPI will distribute the Flexibility Funds on January 24, 2003. Use revenue code 3282 to record the deposit in the Flex Fund (29) (see the OPI payment advice).

The Flex Fund (29) is a budgeted fund. If budget authority was not established in the FY 2002-03 Final Budget, you will have to adopt a budget amendment in order to spend the money this year. Funding may be held over to spend in FY 04. For more info about the Flex Fund, see: [Flex Fund Memo](#). Need assistance? Contact Bonnie Maze at (406) 444-3249 or [bmaze@state.mt.us](mailto:bmaze@state.mt.us).

### **Question of the Month: Investments Outside the County Treasurer?**

Q: In order to buy investments directly from an investment brokerage firm, does the district need to have a contract with the County Treasurer? Are pledged securities required?

A: Yes, a contract with the County Treasurer is required. Securities (stocks, mutual funds, etc.) purchased through an investment firm are "investment accounts" that are governed by section 20-9-235, MCA, which requires the district to sign a contract with the County Treasurer before establishing investment accounts. ARM 10.10.613 requires the contract to be signed no later than June 30 for investment accounts to be established the following fiscal year.

Yes, pledged securities are necessary. ARM 10.10.611 requires the district to obtain written documentation that the firm " ...acquires pledged securities in the same manner and amount as required in 7-6-202 and 7-6-213, MCA, for investments which are not guaranteed or uninsured investments".

Before opting to invest money outside the County Treasurer, districts should review requirements for investments under ARM 10.10.613 and MCA 20-9-235. Contact Jim Oberembt at (406) 444-1257, or [joberembt@state.mt.us](mailto:joberembt@state.mt.us).



#### **Impact Aid Application Data:**

OPI sent Impact Aid districts a help-sheet and information packet on  
Friday, January 10.  
Contact Tal Redpath at (406) 444-3024 or [fredpath@state.mt.us](mailto:fredpath@state.mt.us).

## **GASB 34 News: GASB 34 Workgroup**

During December and January, OPI staff met with a group of clerks and auditors to discuss GASB 34 issues related to schools. Notes from the meetings are posted on the School Finance GASB 34 website at

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/gasb34.html> for any interested parties to follow. The group will plan follow-up meetings as needed. Contact Denise Ulberg at (406) 444-0783 or [dulberg@state.mt.us](mailto:dulberg@state.mt.us).

### **Drivers Not Aware of New Bus Driver Training Requirements??**

OPI has recently learned that important information sent to clerks via this newsletter and the school transportation newsletter has not been passed along to school transportation staff in all school districts. The information concerns a new requirement, effective in FY 2002-03, for districts to provide a bus driver training program including at least 10 hours of training for each bus driver each year.



**PLEASE.....Share ALL official email and newsletter communications from OPI with appropriate staff in your districts! We're depending on YOU!**

If you need more information concerning bus driver training requirements, contact Maxine Mougeot at [mmougeot@state.mt.us](mailto:mmougeot@state.mt.us) or (406) 444-3096.

***In case you missed it....***

**A-133 audits for FY02 are due by  
March 30.**

Contact Mike Waterman at (406) 444-4524 or [mwaterman@state.mt.us](mailto:mwaterman@state.mt.us).



### **Useful Websites:**

OPI's GASB 34 Web Page:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/gasb34.html>.

OPI's "Get Answers" searchable databases:

[http://data.opi.state.mt.us/scripts/rightnow.cfg/php.exe/eanduser/std\\_alp.php](http://data.opi.state.mt.us/scripts/rightnow.cfg/php.exe/eanduser/std_alp.php)? [Tip: Type in a phrase with a "+" sign before each word, like "+spring +enrollment"]

Bus Safety and Driver Training Videos:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/pupiltransport/DriverTrainingLib.pdf>.

School Finance forms and publications:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/forms.html>

2003 Elections Calendar:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/schoolfinance/forms/electioncal03.pdf> Need more information about elections? Contact Mike Waterman at (406) 444-4524 or [mwaterman@state.mt.us](mailto:mwaterman@state.mt.us).

2003 Legislative Bills Tracking:

[http://laws.leg.state.mt.us/pls/laws03/law0203w\\$.startup](http://laws.leg.state.mt.us/pls/laws03/law0203w$.startup)

List of all Official OPI E-Mails:

[http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Official\\_Mail](http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Official_Mail)